

desks, others stood in the passage. Women and youngsters were not admitted. The teacher introduced us without committing himself. "These people wish to talk to you about the Tsar's Manifesto. I don't know what they will say."

I began with the remark that we in St. Petersburg did not know much of what was going on in the villages and assumed that peasants, in turn, did not know much about events in St. Petersburg. We wished to tell the villagers what was happening in the capital and learn what they thought about it. The audience seemed interested, but the story of the struggle of St. Petersburg workers found no response. The faces were becoming grim. An old peasant sitting in the front row interrupted me harshly. "Explain why the railroad stopped?"

"I have told you why the workers—"

"You have told us, and we have listened. But other people have told us that the rich and educated people stopped the railroad to bring serfdom back."

Several men were on their feet now, shouting and gesticulating. It was not clear whether they were shouting at one another or at us. I tried to explain that we were on the side of simple people, but the noise became so deafening I had to give up.

Eugene rose, stretching out both hands. The peasants seemed curious to hear what the lad would say. He began to speak of unrest among peasants and the forthcoming redistribution of land. When he stopped, the old man who had interrupted me said, "That is different. That suits us."

He asked us to explain what the peasants might expect from the Manifesto. My arguments for establishing a government for the people and by the people in Russia met with general approval. All was fine until an old man who looked like the village patriarch came to the crucial question: "And what about the Tsar?"

I answered, "There is no need for a Tsar under a government by the people."

Then hell broke loose. The muzhiks stood up and shouted with anger. The patriarch came close to me and said grimly, "What you have said about the people's government is all right with us. But after what you said about the Tsar, we cannot let you go away. Get a rope, brothers."

Standing on a bench, I shouted to the crowd, "Listen! Most people in the cities and on the railroads think as we do. If you rope us and then dare to appear in the city or on the railroad, our friends will rope you. Is this what you want?"

An elderly man said, "We seek no quarrel with the city people."